

## Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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### “Grocery? Shopping”

As I left to do the weekly grocery shopping (I had lost a bet earlier in the week), my wife said, “Would you get me a pair of tan knee high’s and a pair of off-black panty hose while you’re at the store?”

“Sure,” I said.

I’m not accustomed to buying my wife’s undergarments unless it’s Valentine’s Day when I, like so many other men, overestimate my wife’s fondness for skimpy unmentionables from Victoria’s Secret. Then, I’m more than happy to purchase that perfect combination of feathers, string and mesh to which my wife will most certainly respond, “I’m not wearing *that*.”

I pondered the concept of panty hose in a grocery store and the curiosity got the best of me. I wondered what other non-groceries might be found amongst the familiar meat, produce and dairy products.

The first unusual item I found was a full service bank right there inside the store. At what point did we decide we needed on-the-spot loans just to get a dozen eggs and a carton of milk? I snooped around the bank to see why they were there. The bank manager saw me and asked if I needed anything.

“No,” I told him, “I’m just doing some *free checking*.”

As I continued on my quest for panty hose, I passed a florist, an automotive supply section, a shelf full of underwear and a huge rack of books. Whereas I would not be caught dead in a pair of Safeway skivvies, I could see myself buying books at a grocery store. They do contain, after all, *food* for thought.

In the pharmacy area, I noticed a self-administering blood pressure machine. According to a recent copy of *Men’s Health*, these things don’t even work. Apparently they’re not accurate. I was shocked. A grocery store blood pressure machine that doesn’t work? Next, they’ll inform us that the eye chart in the laundry mat isn’t accurate either.

Just before the panty hose “department”, I found a bonus aisle where I could purchase furnace filters, candles, rain gear and shoe polish. It’s like an entire mall compacted into sixty square feet. But there’s not enough room for a large inventory. So if your

furnace filter is not size A-1 Medium, you're out of luck. And if you want a candle that doesn't smell like Peach Fondue or Summer Field Mist, you'll have to go elsewhere.

Finally, I arrived at the panty hose aisle. There in what may be the largest selection of panty hose in the world, was an expansive array of knee highs, control tops and reinforced toes displayed in a variety of boxes, plastic wraps and...eggs. I'm not sure what nylons have to do with eggs but I chuckled at the thought of an unsuspecting shopper accidentally taking home a dozen stockings for breakfast.

I grabbed a black pair but they were size Q in "Midnight Black". Apparently size Q is the largest. Other than Q, there are A, B and C. How would you like to be a Q and know that you're size is so big, they skipped 13 letters of the alphabet to make up the difference?

I pulled packages off the shelf. There was "Off Black", "Dark Black", "Nude Black" and of course "Black". I found an Off Black egg but it only came in Q and C. According to the size chart, my wife is a B. And not knowing whether Almost Black was the same thing as Off Black, I looked for a salesperson. The only one there was the meat department manager. Suspecting that this was not his expertise, I randomly chose two pairs of Off Black's and threw two tan knee highs in my cart.

I felt myself growing faint. Then I remembered the blood pressure machine. The gauge read 450 over 375. I could have exploded at any minute. However, the fine print said the machine had an error factor of  $\pm 400$  points. I would live to shop another day.

As I walked to my car, I realized this was not my father's grocery store. What used to be the land of milk, bread and honey is now crowded urban sprawl where you can refinance your mortgage, change your oil or rent a carpet cleaner.

By the way, I learned something else while in the so-called grocery store. The metal black handled cat pooper scooper can also be found in the kitchen utensil aisle as a straining device. Make sure you get the right one!

Until next time, just humor me.

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